

# Course provides green for town

## New management company nets record receipts at North Hill

By Grey Perry  
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DUXBURY — In its first year of managing Duxbury's public golf course, Johnson Turf Management has set North Hill on a new course.

Since taking over North Hill golf course a year ago, recreation director Gordon Cushing says the management company has reported a record year in revenue from the course. With still more play possible this year, receipts through September were \$377,000. Cushing said October results would not be available until later this week. The maximum receipts for a year reported by the previous management group were \$320,000 in 1995. Income to the town is fixed at a flat rental fee of \$120,000 a year for the three

years of the present contract. This compares to income of \$75,000 in 1994, and \$65,000 in 1995, during which income was reduced by two months due to a challenge in the bidding procedure for an outside management company, according to Cushing. Eight years ago, the rental income was \$20,000 per year.

"The success this year is directly attributable to the improved condition of the course," said Cushing. "And that was due to the sprinkler system the town installed last fall, after the drought of 1995."

Jeff Stewart, general manager and golf professional, was brought in by the new management firm, as was John Hiltz, green superintendent.

Stewart said many changes were made to the course including maintenance that had been neglected in the past. Bunkers were reshaped, sodded, and work on several tees was done. New mowing equipment was brought in to replace obsolete gang mowers, and fairways, rough and

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fringe were mowed at different heights for the first time. "We got immediate positive feedback from the golfers," said Stewart. "The sprinkler system was a big commitment by the town, and really helped, because we did have a short dry spell in between all the rain this summer."

"The wet summer helped the course tremendously," Hiltz said. "We could have run the sprinklers constantly and still not had the improvement we got from the natural rainfall. However, the new sprinkler system will insure we

can keep the gains we made in overall course condition."

When an old maintenance barn collapsed last winter, the insurance money was used to build a new space building to house the equipment for the grounds crew.

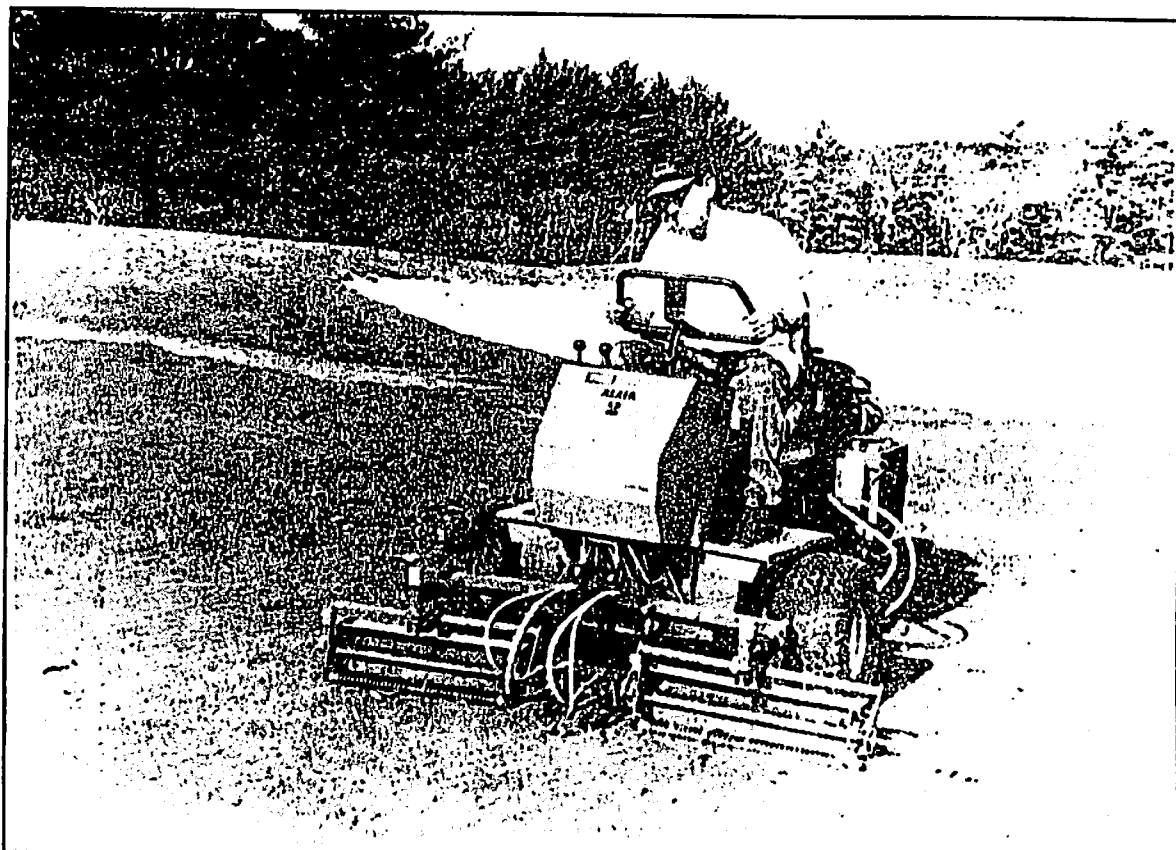
Daily fees remained about the same this year, although some membership categories went up in cost. Stewart said most golfers felt those changes were justified. While there were somewhat fewer members, more transients could play, and that resulted in increased revenues. "We estimate daily revenues increased by 30-35

percent," said Stewart.

A new tee time policy also allowed greater access for townspeople who were not closed out for weekend play by members' tee times. The 10 round coupons were quite popular and will be offered again next year. There was a full compliment of 110 junior memberships this summer.

Stewart said more changes will be made next summer as the ongoing renovations of the course take place. In the meantime, the course will be open all winter without using temporary greens or tees, weather permitting.

## ■ Course



Staff photo/Grey Perry

**Greens with envy** — John Hiltz, greens superintendent for North Hill Country Club, has helped put Duxbury's municipal course in its best shape in years.